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Assets School

Learning that transforms lives

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Paul Singer, M.A., M.Ed.
Head of School

Sandi Tadaki, M.Ed.
Assistant Head of School,
Director of Admissions

Ryan C. Masa, Ed.M.
Principal, K-8

Suzy Travis, Ed.D.
Principal, 9-12

Dear Councilmember Pine:

I am writing to ask for your support of Bill 13 which designates a portion of Grants in Aid funds to Assets School. As indicated in our vision statement, "Assets School provides premier educational services to gifted and dyslexic children by providing model, integrated learning environments and *professional outreach programs* (emphasis added). We aspire to a community – in Hawaii and throughout the world – in which all children thrive and realize their own potential so that society benefits from their unique talents and abilities."

We first reached out to schools in your district over a decade ago, desiring to increase awareness of effective literacy practices that included early identification of at-risk children and introduction of research-proven multi-sensory language interventions. After a wary start, one teacher from Kamaile Academy signed up for specialized training in the Slingerland Approach; after witnessing its powerful impact on students, others followed. (Training was *gratis*; costs were covered by grants.) While administrative changes diminished our impact in Kamaile, that first change agent, Diane Arakaki, knows that our Director of Outreach and Professional Development Darlene Robertson is always available to her for consultation as needed because we at Assets School are interested in not only introducing new practices, but in sustaining them as well. Diane and some of her colleagues continue to attend our various professional development workshops.

We have since partnered with Kamehameha Schools to provide early literacy screenings, professional development workshops, and parent education forums through Ka Waihona o Ka Na'auao Charter School. Because that school's administration is invested in capacity building, educators there no longer rely on Darlene to administer and interpret the Predictive Assessment of Reading because she has helped them cultivate their own in-house experts. Because of Darlene's training and on-going coaching, teachers and support staff educated in multi-sensory language strategies are able to provide necessary instruction to at-risk or struggling learners. Ka Waihona faculty and Darlene work *together* to integrate existing resources to advance teachers' practices and efficacy.

More recently, Darlene and I have been representing Assets in a cohort of educators working with Nicole Souza, Director of Early Childhood for Kamehameha Schools' Ka Pua Initiative, to promote early literacy amongst Leeward Coast educators and families. Assets was present at its Preschool Fair in January and recently established an office in the Early Learning Services Kahale at the Community Learning Center in Ma'ili where we will continue the work begun at Ka Waihona.

Darlene was invited to participate in the P-3 Alignment Hawaii 96792: Early Learning Alignment Committee, a collaboration involving leaders of public schools and nonprofit organizations, and to join a group of early childhood professionals planning the first-ever early literacy symposium to be held in Ma'ili in Fall 2015.

We at Assets School recognize that it is a privilege and honor to be accepted by this extraordinary ohana and cherish any opportunity to work with the Leeward community in support our keiki.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Tadaki

Sandi Tadaki
Assistant Head and Director of Admission

MISC. COM. 1832
Council



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